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ABSTRACT

Intended to stimulate discussion within the employment and training community, this issues paper tells how to enhance the employment opportunities for older workers, particularly through the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA). The document consists of an introduction, 23 narrative sections, references, and a 28-item annotated bibliography. Each of the narrative sections addresses the topic expressed as a question in its heading. Among the section headings are How Should Current Business Trends Affect Local JTPA Policy?, What Federal Resources Can Be Used for Older Workers?, How Can the Job Training Partnership Act Help Older Workers?, What Is Title V, and How Well Does It Complement JTPA?, Can the Carl Perkins Act Help Older Workers?, What Are the Pros and Cons of Broadening Income Eligibility for the Three Percent Program?, What Factors Keep Older Individuals Out of the Three Percent Program?, How Is Recruiting Older People Different than Recruiting Younger Ones?, What Assessment Issues Relate Specifically to Older Workers?, What Are the Key Skills Training Considerations?, How Well Does On-the-job Training Work for Older People?, When Is Entrepreneurial Training Appropriate for Older Workers?, Why Are Part-Time Placements So Important for Older People?, How Do Wage Levels Relate to Part-Time Placements?, How Can You Increase Your Post-Placement Retention Rates?, What Are the Key Staffing Issues for Three Percent Programs?, and What Data Should Programs Collect and Why? (CML)

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ISSUES IN TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT

Continuing ~~RETURNING~~ TO WORK:
JTPA AND THE OLDER WORKER

Frances R. Rothstein

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION of COUNTIES

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Continuing ~~Returning~~ to Work:

JTPA and the Older Worker

Frances R. Rothstein

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CONTINUING TO WORK: JTPA AND THE OLDER WORKER

Preface

The National Association of Counties (NACo) is pleased to publish this *Issue Paper* entitled "Continuing to Work: JTPA and the Older Worker". Recently, much discussion has focused on the values of older workers to business because of their loyalty and productivity. There also has been much discussion on the need for job training assistance for older workers. However, only recently has there been any constructive discussion about what to do to enhance the employment opportunities for older workers. This paper addresses those issues and offers some ideas on how to approach the problems of older workers through JTPA.

This paper was sponsored by NACo's Training and Employment Programs, through a grant from the United States Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration. This paper is meant to stimulate discussion within the employment and training community. We would appreciate your comments. Please address your comments to Neil E. Bomberg, Research Associate and Editor, Issue Papers Series, National Association of Counties, 440 First Street, NW, Washington, DC 20001.

CONTINUING TO WORK: JTPA AND THE OLDER WORKER

BY FRANCES R. ROTHSTEIN

INTRODUCTION

For many years, we as a nation have spent billions of dollars trying to understand how to train, educate, and motivate young people, and how to place them successfully in private sector employment. In contrast, we have spent very little money or energy examining how to train and retrain older workers, and how to place and retain them in the workforce. Now, we are approaching a time in which it is in the national interest to develop productive work opportunities for older people. Our continued economic growth and international competitiveness depend on our ability to keep older workers in the workforce. Yet, we have only a small body of knowledge and experience in what works, and we have only a brief window of opportunity in which to identify successful strategies and multiply them across the country. Current and projected demographic shifts are forcing us to try harder to recruit, train, and retain older workers. Along with this development, a new consensus is growing that recognizes older workers as "important to the success of American industry, not only as a resource for production but also for the maturity and experience they bring to the workplace."[1]

Until fairly recently, most employers shared the view that their investment in recruiting, training and retaining older workers would not pay off. Job development for older workers was a hard sell; program staff were often unable to convince companies to give older workers a try. Many businesses were pushing their own older employees into early retirement, and were hardly interested in hiring more older people. Few companies considered instituting the kinds of alternative work arrangements (part-time work, part-year work, job-sharing) that appeal to many older workers. Older workers themselves often bought into the negative stereotypes promoted by the media and the public at large and did not seek employment because they felt there was no place for them in the world of work.

Times have changed, and the business world's perceptions have changed too. While many of the negative stereotypes about older people persist, businesses with an eye on the future realize that the aging of the American population — and of the American workforce — leaves them little choice. The median age of the work force will rise from 34.6 in 1980 to 39 by the year 2000, with the greatest increases among workers over 55, while the pool of young labor force entrants will decline by nearly one million. The average age of the labor force is projected to have risen two and one half times in just the 13 years from 1982 to 1995, when there will be more than 38 million workers 50 and older.

Forward-looking companies, as well as those in labor markets already experiencing labor shortages, have begun to develop special programs to attract older workers and to keep them productive. A review of the past few years of business publications corroborates this new and growing private sector interest in the aging workforce. Issues range from the negative (e.g., a fear that age discrimination suits are on the rise, along with increases in the size of age discrimination awards) to the more positive (e.g., an examination of the positive contributions of older workers and the techniques a company can utilize to get and keep them on the job). By definition, employers concerned with supply and demand and with bottom-line profits, initially began looking into older workers as an antidote to the dwindling youth entry-level work force, as Business Week asserted in an August, 1987, cover story:

> Workers who are qualified will do well in the coming labor shortage environment. Older Americans will have the option of post-retirement careers . . . If immigrants aren't available and youth aren't qualified for low-skilled work, retirees may be.

Two of the industries that have received the most publicity for their increasing reliance on older

workers are the financial services industry and the food service industry. Among financial services companies, The Travelers Companies pioneered a retiree job bank that uses the company's own retirees for part-time and temporary assignments, tapping the work ethic and corporate loyalty developed over decades of employment. Other financial institutions, faced with a highly competitive climate resulting from banking deregulation, have turned to older workers because their patience and dedication to customer service, as compared to a lack thereof among their younger counterparts, is effective in attracting and retaining valued customers.

The food service industry's courtship of older employees was illustrated by a conference sponsored by the National Restaurant Association and the American Association of Retired Persons and funded by Kentucky Fried Chicken in the summer of 1987: Over 350 food service executives showed up to learn where to find older workers and how to entice them to work in their restaurants. Many older worker program specialists criticize the food service industry's apparent willingness to view older workers' qualifications and needs as interchangeable with younger workers — from paying them minimum wage to refusing to consider a benefit package for part-timers. Those views and the policies they engender are fast changing; labor shortages and pressure from older worker advocates have already caused some companies to experiment with benefit packages for part-time workers; a departure from past practice that will benefit part-time workers of all ages.

Some of the companies facing labor shortages are beginning to think of older workers less in terms of a replacement for scarce younger employees and more as a valuable resource as a direct result of their age and experience. For example, the National Council on the Aging is working with McDonald's Corporation to design a management training program for older workers that demonstrates the company's commitment to a career ladder for those workers.

These very real changes in demography and in employer perception of older workers have made the older worker job development task much easier. For the most part, except in depressed economies where job development for any client group is close to impossible, older worker program staff have less difficulty finding jobs for older workers than in years past. There is still an issue regarding the quality of the jobs available for older workers; however, research on businesses' experiences with older employees suggests that age can be a plus in a number of job categories:

> Older people seem to have achieved superior standing among sales workers ... and to have remained high performers. Reports from insurance companies, auto dealers, and large department stores suggest that age is an asset, if a factor at all, in performance ...
>
> Age has had surprisingly little effect on manual workers. In several studies, performance seemed to remain fully steady through age 50 ... The decline in productivity in the 50s never seemed to drop more than 10 percent from peak performance ...
>
> A study of 6,000 government and private industry office [clerical] workers found no significant difference in output by age. Older workers had a steadier rate of work and were equally productive.[2]

HOW SHOULD CURRENT BUSINESS TRENDS AFFECT LOCAL JTPA POLICY?

Private sector employers are the ultimate consumers of the Job Training Partnership Act's product. Those employers are increasingly concerned about hiring, training, and retaining older workers. JTPA policymakers need to respond to that concern in several ways:

- First, state and local JTPA program priorities need to address older workers on an equal part with youth and welfare recipients. A policy that promotes recruitment, training, and placement of older individuals benefits business by increasing the range of potential employees available in the local labor force and enhances the community's perception of the JTPA program by tapping an underutilized source of productive workers.

- Second, older workers need to be enrolled in all Title IIA-funded training and placement

programs for which they qualify and from which they could benefit, and not be limited to just those programs run under the Three Percent Set-Aside Program reserved for economically disadvantaged individuals aged 55 and above. Older workers have been under-represented in Title IIA programs to date.

- Third, older dislocated workers should be a target group for Title III programs. The recent changes in Title III as a result of passage of the Economic Dislocation and Worker Adjustment Assistance Act offers an opportunity for increased coordination with the Three Percent Set-Aside, and for improved service to older dislocated workers, especially those needing intensive retraining.

- Fourth, particular attention needs to be paid to people between 40 and 55 — individuals with many years of potentially productive work ahead of them who are often considered too old for mainstream programs that concentrate on younger trainess, yet who are too young for service through the Older Worker Set-Aside because of its 55 plus age limit.

- Fifth, all JTPA programs — not only those funded through the Older Worker Set-Aside — need to know about and establish linkages with the other agencies and programs that offer supportive service for older people. Area agencies on aging, senior displaced homemakers programs, the Social Security and Supplemental Security Insurance programs — all can help build the support system many older people need in order to succeed in training and eventual employment.

The remainder of this issue paper focuses primarily on the JTPA Three Percent Set-Aside Program; however, many of the issues raised apply as well to JTPA Title IIA adult programs and Title III dislocated worker programs which serve workers age 40 and older, as well as to training and workforce education programs for the 40 plus population available through other public or private sector funds.

WHO BENEFITS FROM EFFECTIVE OLDER WORKER EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS?

Exactly what is the constituency for older worker programs? Without defining that, policymakers have less incentive to take a strong leadership role in promoting such programs.

Older workers are the primary group that the Three Percent program and other older worker program resources were established to serve. Older workers have certain training needs and labor force entry difficulties that need special attention. Older people are likely to have "bought into" the negative ageist stereotypes so pervasive in our society, and many who would like to work are too discouraged to seek employment or training without recruitment strategies designed to disabuse them of the notion that there is no place in the workforce for them. Older women in particular — much more likely than older men to be living alone and in poverty and much more likely to have little or no marketable employment history — need a range of supportive services in order to succeed as workers. In short, for the older workers eligible for the Three Percent program and other federal training resources, working is not a discretionary choice; they need the income, and, because of limited or erratic job histories or past discrimination, they need the training these programs offer.

Businesses are facing labor shortages in many areas of the country, a situation which is likely to worsen in the future. In addition, the shift to a service-producing economy and the intoduction of new technology has given many industries the opportunity to structure less physically demanding jobs than in the past, opening up more job choices to older workers. Plus, employers complain that young, entry-level applicants lack the basic skills needed to do the job, haven't developed a strong work ethic, and aren't available in sufficient numbers to support business expansion — conditions that make older workers seem more attractive in comparison. Businesses also recognize the value of having older people in customer contact positions. People 55 and older make up more than one fifth of American consumers — a sizable market segment by any standards, and one businesses are seeking to attract.

Political leaders are finding that public endorsement for programs that benefit older people translates directly into votes at the polls. Older people are known for their high voting turnouts; job training, job opportunities, and economic

self-sufficiency are issues that matter to them. In addition, political leaders can increase their standing in the business community through their support for older worker programs, particularly as businesses look more and more toward the prospect of attracting, managing, and retaining an older workforce. Finally, by encouraging productive options for older people, political leaders can demonstrate their conviction that every citizen has something to contribute to society and should have the chance to do so.

[The political constituency for the Three Percent program has been particularly hard to build. For Governors and state-level policymakers, the Three Percent program was the smallest setaside, and dealt with a population with which state job training staff had little experience or expertise. For local elected officials, PIC members, and local job training staff, the Three Percent program was initially a headache because of its slow start; also, because not every SDA receives Three Percent funds, the program was not a universal concern.]

All public employment programs have a vested interest in effective older worker programs. With older workers increasingly in demand among employers, older workers can help open the door for other placements. Programs which train and place older clients who prove to be valued workers in a specific company can often induce that company to give other public employment program clients a try.

Finally, *society* as a whole benefits from sound older worker employment programs. Older people who are working are more self-sufficient and less dependent upon public support. (They also need less financial help from their children.) There is some evidence that continued employment has a positive effect on health which means lower Medicare and Medicaid costs. Older people who are in productive roles side-by-side with younger workers help dispel ageist stereotypes by example, and promote intergenerational understanding which can help combat the dangerous and counterproductive intergenerational tensions that have gotten so much press in the past couple of years. Also, most of the policy adjustments businesses make to accommodate older workers' needs and preferences — such as part-time schedules, job-sharing, cafeteria benefit plans, and universal access to training — benefit the workforce in general.

WHAT FEDERAL RESOURCES CAN BE USED FOR OLDER WORKERS?

When most SDA staff and PIC members think "older workers," they think "Three Percent Set-Aside Program," and much of this paper does indeed focus on that program. But the Three Percent Set-Aside is only a small program, it can serve only a fraction of the eligible population, and it is not necessarily available in every SDA. The Three Percent Program is most effective as one of several tools which can be used to prepare older workers for private sector jobs.

In fact, there are four sources of public funds that can be used to prepare older workers for private sector employment: several parts of the Job Training Partnership Act, the Senior Community Service Employment Program (Title V of the Older Americans Act), the Perkins Vocational Education Act, and Adult Basic Education. Some of these resources are limited to people 55 and over, while others have broader eligibility in terms of age. It is useful to know about all the funding sources, and to understand the particular value of each in serving different types of older workers in different circumstances. Some of the best local programs coordinate several funding sources to provide the most comprehensive array of services for the widest range of older individuals.

HOW CAN THE JOB TRAINING PARTNERSHIP ACT HELP OLDER WORKERS?

Older workers can benefit from service under four different parts of JTPA: the Three Percent Set-Aside Program for Older Individuals, Title IIA Adult and Youth Services (including the "10 percent window" provision), Title III Economic Dislocation and Worker Adjustment Assistance Act funds, and the Eight Percent Educational Coordination funds.

The Three Percent Set-Aside, comprising three percent of the state's Title IIA allocation, is the part of JTPA most frequently associated with older workers, because it is the part that serves their needs exclusively. In Program Year 1987,

the $ 55 million in Three Percent Set-Aside funds served 53,000 individuals.[3] Eligibility is restricted to people 55 years old and older who are economically disadvantaged. Beyond that, there is little guidance or restriction in the law regarding how the funds may be used. Governors are required to consult with private industry councils and chief elected officials, and they are encouraged to assist programs that train older workers for jobs in growth industries and new technological skill areas. Regulations do require that as in Title IIA, at least 70 percent of the funds be used for training. Even so, the program allows states a lot of flexibility.

Governors can allocate the Three Percent Set-Aside in various ways. Some states distribute the funds to SDAs or through State Units on Aging to Area Agencies on Aging by formula. Some distribute the funds through an RFP process. Some give the funds to a sole service provider for use throughout the state. Some run demonstration programs directly. And some states use a combination of funding strategies. The law allows the Governor to fund virtually any type of service provider: public agencies, nonprofit entities, and private for profit firms. In some cases, those SDAs that get funds by formula or otherwise from the state then subcontract it out to community colleges, Area Agencies on Aging, or other institutions. There is no requirement, however, that funds be available within every SDA. If your SDA is not now receiving Three Percent funds, your state's JTPA administrative office or State Unit on Aging can tell you whether there is some other entity within your borders operating a Three Percent program, and how to access Three Percent funds.

Title IIA funds for adults can be used to train and place income-eligible older workers, but in fact only a small percentage of IIA enrollees have been older workers (around three percent of all participants — far less than their incidence in the eligible population). In program Year 1987, only $31 million in IIA funds went toward services for older people, only 14,800 of whom participated in IIA programs.[4] There are several reasons for this. Some jurisdictions established a policy — official or de facto — of automatically referring any applicant 55 or older to a Three Percent program — not necessarily the best way to serve the older individual's needs, but politically attractive if the Three Percent program was underenrolled, and administratively attractive if local IIA staffs did not include people with experience in (or commitment to) meeting the special need of older people. Even when older people were not barred from enrolling in IIA programs, few IIA programs actively recruited them. Many older people, particularly those 62 and up who have access to Social Security and perhaps to some pension income, prefer to work part-time, and IIA placement services (and performance standards) are geared primarily toward full-time placements.

The "10 percent window," which permits up to 10 percent of an SDA's IIA funds to be used for people who are not economically disadvantaged but who suffer other barriers to employment, specifically mentions older workers as an eligible "window" category. There are no national data on the degree to which SDAs are in fact serving older workers through the window, but anecdotal data are so scarce that it suggests this avenue is not being explored in many places. Many Three Percent Set-Aside programs report having to turn away numerous older people who are slightly over income but who could benefit from JTPA services; these older workers could be legally and equitably served through the window. (The Three Percent Set-Aside program does not have a window provision.)

The Economic Dislocation and Worker Adjustment Assistance Program (EDWAA), the recently amended JTPA Title III, is an excellent way to help older displaced workers re-enter the work force and to prevent their years of experience and their positive work ethic from going to waste. Yet, a recent General Accounting Office study documented what older worker advocates had long suspected: Title III programs have provided inadequate levels of service to older dislocated workers, despite the extra difficulties that older dislocated workers face as a direct result of their age.

The GAO study showed that, although around 20 percent of dislocated workers were 55 or older, that age group comprised only around eight percent of Title III enrollees, despite the fact that older displaced workers have a more difficult

time finding new employment and are unemployed longer than their younger counterparts. (In Program Year 1987, only 11,000 displaced workers 55 and older were served through Title III, with just $18 million in Title III funds.) The GAO study suggested several reasons for underrepresentation of older people in Title III projects:

- Older workers may be apprehensive about participating in remedial or classroom training activities, especially if they lack formal education or recent educational experience.

- Projects may be screening out older displaced workers because they are seen as having less potential for re-employment, due to employer reluctance to hire people over 55.

- Older workers may lack the basic math or communication skills required for participation in some types of IIA training.[5]

The new Title III programs now getting underway provide an opportunity to correct some of the inequities of past displaced worker programs. The definition of eligibility includes workers who are long-term unemployed and who have limited local opportunities for employment or re-employment in the same or a similar occupation, opening the door for service to older workers who may not have been eligible previously. Also, most of the EDWAA funds go to the local level, which should make it easier to coordinate Title III services with local Three Percent Set-Aside programs. Finally, with the requirement that substate grantees spend half their funds on retraining services, program operators may find that older displaced workers, many of whom may have more savings and fewer financial obligations than their younger counterparts still rasing families, are one of the few groups of displaced workers willing and able to participate in long-term training without a wage attached.

JTPA's Eight Percent Educational Coordination funds are usually associated with younger populations; however, there is no reason why Eight Percent funds cannot contribute to labor force preparation of older people as well. In particular, older refugees and other non-English-speakers, older people with insufficient literacy skills, and those lacking a high school diploma can remedy those problems through appropriate Eight Percent programs. The key challenge is to orient local education agencies, accustomed to gearing their programs and services to younger clients, to the fact that older people need and can benefit from educational remediation, and then to encourage those local education agencies to incorporate adult learning principles into their teaching methodologies. Title IIA has been criticized recently for serving insufficient numbers of adult dropouts.[6] Programs need to do a better job of addressing educational deficits among dropouts in the 40 plus age range, through the Eight Percent funds and through other means such as coordination with Adult Basic Education, as described later in this paper.

WHAT IS TITLE V, AND HOW WELL DOES IT COMPLEMENT JTPA?

The Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP), funded through Title V of the Older Americans Act (OAA), subsidizes part-time employment for low-income people 55 and older. Around 65,000 older individuals were employed through Title V in Program Year 1987. Currently funded at $344 million, Title V's appropriation is more than three times as large as the $104 million in JTPA IIA and Three Percent funds that served older workers in Program Year 1987.[7]

Title V is a wage-based program, as compared to JTPA, which pays no wages during training. By placing eligible older people with community agencies for on-the-job training, Title V provides older people an income in return for approximately 20 hours of work per week and supports community service agencies by placing older people there at little or no cost to the agencies, as well as enabling older people access to training. However, while Title V has a 20 percent private sector placement goal, many Title V workers continue with local community service agencies over many years, and their wages continue to be paid out of program funds. Some of these long-term Title V workers are comfortable and content in the community service setting; in other cases, they lack the skills and abilities to transition into private sector jobs.

Twenty-two percent of Title V funds are allocated for state-run programs, while eight national con-

tractors receive 78 percent of the funds. The national contractors include: the National Council on the Aging, the American Association of Retired Persons, Green Thumb, the National Caucus and Center on Black Aged, the National Council of Senior Citizens, the National Urban League, the U.S. Forest Service and the Asociacion Nacional Pro Personas Mayores. Beginning July 1, 1989, there will be two new contractors — an association that serves American Indian seniors and one representing Asian and Pacific Islanders. Your State Unit on Aging or Area Agency on Aging can tell you which contractor runs a Title V program within your SDA.

Title V workers tend to be older than the older workers enrolled in JTPA: Eighty percent of them are over 60. Seventy percent of them are female, over half are not high school graduates, and over a third are minorities. (Title V representation of Blacks, Hispanics, and other minorities is disproportionately high as compared to their incidence in the population, partly because minorities are disproportionately represented among the low-income elderly population.)[8]

There is another difference in the characteristics of Title V workers as compared to Three Percent enrollees. Because some programs allow a Title V worker to stay with one host organization for up to two years, and then to move to another position with another host organization, some Title V workers may become quite comfortable in their commuinity service positions and develop the attitude that they have a job, rather than a training and work experience opportunity. Therefore, although some Title V people attend JTPA job search training, once it is time to actually go out on an interview they refuse because "I have a job." Individuals enrolled in the Three Percent Program, conversely, generally understand from the beginning that private sector employment is the ultimate goal. There is currently great variation among the Title V sponsors on how they handle this issue, as well as increased concern among them about their rotation policies, and programs are trying to determine how best to handle assignments with host organizations so as to meet the needs of both the organizations and the individual workers.

Title V and the JTPA Three Percent Program can work very well together. The Department of Labor estimates that only around 2,000 people have been enrolled in both programs since the start of JTPA, but dual enrollment is far from the only measure of coordination. Joint outreach and recruitment, joint referral, and co-location of enrollment offices can be equally effective coordination strategies. Over time, as more Three Percent program operators have learned about Title V and established contracts with Title V program operators, and vice versa, coordination has increased. In recent years, several of the national contractors have encouraged (or required) their local program operators to negotiate coordination agreements with Three Percent Set-Aside program operators — an excellent approach that has proven effective.

One element of the Title V program is particularly well suited to coordination with JTPA — the experimental program, known as 502(e). These 502(e) projects emphasize the development of second careers for older people in private sector, high-growth occupations. The private sector placement emphasis makes the 502(e) experimental program particularly compatible with JTPA. (However, not all state or national sponsors choose to run experimental programs.)

CAN THE CARL PERKINS ACT HELP OLDER WORKERS?

One stated goal of the Carl Perkins Vocational Education Act of 1984 is to increase access to vocational programs for those who have been underserved in the past. Older workers certainly fall into that category, because vocational education has not traditionally recruited older students or developed courses to meet their learning styles. However, as the younger student pool shrinks over the next few decades, vocational institutions are likely to actively seek older students, which should open up opportunities for older workers to prepare to enter or re-enter the workforce through those institutions.

Equally significant, vocational institutions and community colleges will be increasingly well equipped to serve older workers to the extent that they subscribe to a view of their work as part of a continuum of lifelong learning. Future workforce preparedness will require continuous education

throughout one's working life; as educational institutions become more attuned to that reality, they will inevitably gear themselves more and more to the experienced worker and to the older student seeking skills upgrading or career change education.

One way in which the Perkins funds, as well as state and local vocational education funds, are already helping older workers is through displaced homemaker programs. Vocational education monies are the primary source of funding for displaced homemaker programs; and an increasing percentage of the women in displaced homemaker programs are older women.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF ADULT BASIC EDUCATION?

The Adult Education Act's $100 million in federal funding for adult basic education is supplemented by twice that amount in state funds. Yet, although JTPA Three Percent Program operators lament that many of their applicants lack sufficient educational skills to function effectively in the work place, relatively few of the approximately 3.1 million people a year who participate in adult basic education classes are 55 or older, and few of those are taking courses for the purpose of enhancing their employability.[9]

Certainly, better coordination between the Three Percent Program and the adult basic education system is needed, but coordination is not the whole answer. Most of the teaching funded by the ABE program takes place in organized evening classes; many older people prefer not to travel far from their homes at night. Also, ABE's classroom approach is not a particularly comfortable one for the many non-reading older adults or those with insufficient literacy or math skill levels, because most of them have little recent classroom experience and are uncomfortable in that setting.

In order to benefit from classroom training in basic skills, older adults may need specialized counseling prior to enrollment and on an ongoing basis as well. This is particularly true for older adults who participate in computer-assisted instruction, as many older people are fearful of computers, particularly older adults have been in jobs where computer technology is not a part of day-to-day work life. Also, those Three Percent enrollees who need some income immediately (which is the case for many) may take a very low level job because of their basic skills deficits, and then may lose the motivation to go to classes because they are already working and haven't been counseled adequately about the workplace payoff of basic skills remediation. (Research shows that this payoff is considerable. A recent study of older worker job placement systems found that education had a significant impact on the wage obtained at placement. High school graduates achieved wage rates seven percent higher than those without high school diplomas.)[10]

WHY DO YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT ALL THE FUNDING SOURCES?

One of the most difficult aspects of serving older people's employment needs is that those needs are so varied. The JTPA Three Percent program, with its relatively small funding base, is simply inadequate to help those older people who are illiterate, who need other basic skills remediation, who have little or no recent work experience, who need long-term skills training as well as workplace orientation . . . the list goes on and on.

Three Percent program operators are faced with the dilemma that runs through the entire JTPA system: How can they balance service to those harder-to-serve older workers with multiple employment barriers with service to older people who have legitimate needs, but needs that are easier or quicker to remedy? This is not the usual "creaming" issue: Virtually all older workers — because of their age alone, and regardless of their income — suffer real and significant labor force difficulties.

Most program operators can recount stories of older people who are over the income eligibility standards — perhaps older white males, whom one would expect would have the least difficulty in the labor force — but who have been repeatedly rejected by employers, despite adequate skills and qualifications. Such people do need and deserve help, but programs without multiple ties to other agencies within the community cannot help them. Even more problemmatic are those

applicants who are literally only a few dollars over the income limits and who desperately need assistance, but cannot be served through the Set-Aside.

Policies that encourage cross-referral among both publicly funded and private sector employment and training resources are critical, as is a comprehensive listing of local sources of assistance for people at various income levels. Moreover, it is becoming more common for Three Percent Program operators to establish some type of fee-based service to enable over-income individuals to have access to the services available to their income-eligible counterparts, as such services, tailored to older people, are still not commonly available in may communities.

Programs also need to establish links to a broad spectrum of services not necessarily related to employment, in order to maximize their clients' chances to succeed in the labor force. For example, older people are not unaffected by the exponential growth in America's homeless population; employment program staff need to know about local shelters, emergency housing grant programs, shared housing matching services, and other housing assistance resources. Availability of health services is also a key issue, with older people's needs ranging from a complete physical to hearing aids, eyeglasses, and other technology that can reduce the negative impact of a physical disability in the workplace.

HOW REAL IS UNDEREXPENDITURE IN THE THREE PERCENT PROGRAM?

The Job Training Partnership Act's Three Percent Set-Aside Program for Older Workers is the smallest of the several JTPA setaside programs, and is dwarfed in contrast to the funds designated for youth, adult, and dislocated worker training. The Older Worker Program's status as the smallest state set-aside has conveyed a not-so-subtle message to local policymakers and program planners — a message that older workers are the least important category of JTPA-eligible individuals. During the early years of JTPA, in many areas, this resulted in slow start-up, infrequent and often inadequate technical assistance, and a common view that, in comparison to other target groups, older workers were simply a less important element of the potential workforce. States understandably paid more attention to the larger programs first; also, since there had been no older worker set-aside under CETA, there was little experience in specialized older worker programming, nor were there well-developed older worker employment and training networks in place.

Because of the difficulties associated with getting the Older Worker Program off the ground, underexpenditures were a common problem. This set up a situation in which, on the one hand, older worker advocates were calling for higher funding levels for 55 plus participants (for example, the National Council of the Aging testified in a 1986 Congressional hearing that 20 percent rather than three percent should be set aside for seniors), while local programs were unable to spend the meager older worker set-aside funds they had, and were carrying over unspent amounts from year to year. Were there not substantial numbers of income-eligible older people who needed job training?

Luckily for the political future of the Older Worker Program, the underexpenditure issue, which dogged the program for several years, appears to be out in most states at this point: While the overall expenditure rate (as a percentage of annual allotment) was 69 percent in PY 1984, it had risen to 111 percent by PY 1986, with many jurisdications making significant reductions in their carry-over amounts.[11]

In Congressional testimony in September of 1988, U.S. Department of Labor officials suggested that the Three Percent Program is "close to full dollar utilization" — a welcome change from both a political and a programmatic point of view.[12] Improvements resulted from a number of factors: more attentive state administration of the program, network-building between job training agencies and agencies with expertise in meeting the various needs of older people, more liberal definitions of income for eligibility determination purposes, increased private sector responsiveness to older worker initiatives, and development over time of a cadre of experienced older worker service providers within the job training system.

WHAT ARE THE PROS AND CONS OF BROADENING INCOME ELIGIBILITY FOR THE THREE PERCENT PROGRAM?

The Three Percent Program is limited by law to older people who are economically disadvantaged. That sounds clear enough, but in practice eligibility determination hinges on how each state defines "family" and "family income" for seniors. Defining those terms so as to enlarge the pool of potentially eligible older people is useful for several reasons:

- In jurisdictions in which underexpenditure has been a problem, it helps to have more older people who are eligible for service. This does not necessarily mean that there are not enough older people who meet the strictest eligibility definition; rather, it is more effective for programs to recruit older people without forcing them to self-identify as "poor."

- Since there is no "window" in the Three Percent Program, older people who are slightly over income but who suffer real employment barriers by virtue of their age are denied service if family income is defined narrowly.

- The eligibility standard for Title V (the Senior Community Service Employment Program) is 125 percent of poverty while 100 percent is the JTPA limit. There have been efforts in the Congress to make the JTPA standard compatible with that used in Title V, but they have been unsuccessful thus far. Meanwhile, the difference inhibits joint recruitment and joint enrollment by the two programs. Easing up on the Three Percent eligibility definition is one way to make the programs easier to coordinate.

There is state discretion on three issues related to Three Percent eligibility determination: definition of "family," treatment of Title V wages, and treatment of Social Security. JTPA regulations are silent on whether older workers can be treated as a "family of one" for income determination purposes; currently, 39 states accord older workers that status, which enables them to disregard income received by any other member of the older applicant's household.[13] A decision to treat older workers as a "family of one" is particularly important for woman whose employed husbands had wanted their wives to be "traditional housewives" and discouraged them from working; with "family of one," such women can finally qualify for job training without being disqualified by their husbands' incomes, thus acquiring the skills to become economically self-sufficient both in the present and during the eventual widowhood most married women face.

In defining "family income," most states exempt Title V wages. There is ample justification for that decision: Although Title V provides income support, that objective is only one of three, with the program's job training or community service aspects often overshadowing the wage aspect, particulary in programs that stress timely movement into private sector placements. Likewise, half the states have begun exempting some or all Social Security income from "family income," in order to serve people whose age is a barrier but whose Social Security payments place them above the "poorest of the poor." Broadening the range of income-eligible older people is a totally appropriate thing to do; Congress has acknowledged in the "window" language and elsewhere that age is a true barrier to employment, so programs serving a population that is over the strictest income limits are still serving "harder-to-serve" people faced with employment barriers.

It can be argued that liberalizing the income standards for the Three Percent program actually brings that program more in line with the 125 percent of poverty that is the eligibility standard for Title V, which should serve to ease joint outreach and recruitment, as well as joint enrollment, between the two programs. However, there is still the administrative burden of determining eligibility separately for each program, as long as they have different income standards — regardless of how close they may be as a result of expanding Three Percent eligibility.

WHAT FACTORS KEEP OLDER INDIVIDUALS OUT OF THE THREE PERCENT PROGRAM?

In the first few years of the Three Percent Set-Aside program, before the program improvements that have since enabled program operators to increase their expenditure rates, there was a

crisis among the older worker advocacy organizations. All the data pointed to huge numbers of older people, many of whom were living in poverty and had been forced out of the workforce (or had had only marginal labor force attachment over their lifetimes), few of whom had up-to-date skills or the confidence and savvy to market themselves to employers. By rights, they should have been flocking to the Three Percent Program. Yet, operators across the country lamented that they couldn't find eligible, willing participants.

The second part of that dilemma was that the advocacy groups pointed to the large and growing numbers of older people who were supposed to be "out there" in need of help entering or reentering the labor force and said the program was underfunded, and that three percent was to small an amount of funds to meet the need. Yet, nonetheless, programs were carrying over large sums from year to year.

WHERE WERE ALL THE ELIGIBLE OLDER WORKERS?

Some of them had joined the ranks of discouraged workers—people who want a job but do not look for one because they think no jobs are available, that they would not be hired, or that they would not be able to find one that meets their needs (e.g., part-time, on public transportation). There are relatively more discouraged workers among older people than among younger ones. Among people 60 and older, for example, there were 186,000 discouraged workers in 1986 who, had they been included in labor force statistics, would have increased the unemployment rate for workers 60 plus from 3.5 to 5.8 percent — a considerable difference.[14]

Others were dislocated older workers who had been laid off and were hoping to be reinstated in their old jobs — often a vain hope, but one that kept them from responding to new opportunities. There are also those whose previous jobs had vanished through plant closings or economic shifts. Older unemployed older workers stay unemployed longer than younger ones, with workers between 55 and 64 having the longest duration of unemployment of any group in the country — 24 weeks on average in 1986, as compared to 13 weeks for workers between 20 and 24.[15]

Many were older woman, who had never thought of themselves as potential members of the labor force. Older displaced homemakers are particularly difficult to attract, in part because society devalues their unpaid labor in the home, in part because many of them had never thought of themselves as members of the paid labor force, and in part because of the isolation common to many older displaced homemakers' lives.

Some were disabled older workers, who had not, over long periods of time, been able to find either the training or the employment situations that could accommodate their disabilities, and who avoid the potential for further rejecting by not seeking entry to the workforce.

Finally, there were those older people who have contented themselves with occasional work at poor pay because they thought that was all they could get.

But mostly, the early recruitment problems stemmed directly from program operators' inexperience in marketing their services to older workers. They went to the wrong place with the wrong message offering the wrong services. For example, recruiters canvassed senior centers repeatedly before they finally realized that most people in senior centers aren't interested in working. Brochures commonly asked: "Are you over 55? Are you unemployed? Are you low-income?" Older peope don't identify themselves that way. They may think of themselves as "retired" — a much more socially acceptable term than "unemployed." They also are unlikely to self-identify as "low-income," or "poor."

Now, programs have become much more adept at tailoring their recruitment strategies toward the different subsets of the older population, and serious older worker recruitment problems persist primarily in labor shortage areas. It is important, though, to periodically compare your recruitment strategies with the specific categories of older workers you are trying to attract.

HOW IS RECRUITING OLDER PEOPLE DIFFERENT THAN RECRUITING YOUNGER ONES?

Any successful recruitment strategy has to locate potential participants, build their confidence in

the likelihood they can get and keep a job, build trust in the program's ability to help them, and offer the training and supportive services they need.

For older workers, this means thinking about how — and where —they live their lives, what motivates them, and where their special needs and deficiencies are. A lot of older people will respond more to personal contact than to mass media because they have internalized negative stereotypes about themselves.

Try recruiting older displaced homemakers through their teen or adult children who may already be enrolled in IIA training. Try to personalize older people's issues. If you do advertise, consider placing your ads in the food section, in the local news section, or in church newsletters, rather than in the "help wanted" section.

Recruitment campaigns should promote appropriate incentives. For example, while job security and high wages may be the most effective "hook" for a welfare mother with children to support, a person over 62 may respond more to the opportunity to make a productive contribution to society, or to achieve enhanced selfworth and purpose, or to work a less-than-full-time schedule. It is particularly important to acknowledge the diversity among older people, and to tailor strategies to match those subcategories. You need, for example, to differentiate between people 55-62 (who are more likely to want full-time work) and those who are older. Another consideration is that health benefits are an important incentive for people under 65, who are not eligible for Medicare.

Older worker experts, national advocacy organizations, and others have written volumes about effective recruiting; the reader is referred to those resources, listed in the bibliography at the end of this paper.

WHAT ASSESSMENT ISSUES RELATE SPECIFICALLY TO OLDER WORKERS?

Effective basic skills assessment is both a critical need and a serious dilemma for virtually all JTPA client groups. Indeed, the following comments, although written in the context of youth programming, are totally apt for older workers as well.

For the purposes of JTPA basic skills testing, none of the standardized tests can compare a JTPA clients score in relationship to other JTPA clients. Second, these standardized tests measure what a person knows in relationship to the basic skills, not what a person can do with those basic skills, not what a person knows.

Increased public demand for job training accountability has reinforced the critical nature of basic skills assessment in the employability development arena. At the same time, mounting concerns in the employment and training community about cost-effective programming are challenging practitioners to build on what is known about basic skills assessment in systematic and expedient ways. Perhaps more than any other program component, client assessment of basic education skills is fundamental to cost-effective job training programming and ultimately labor force productivity.[16]

The most challenging aspect of assessing older workers' basic skills levels and relating them to employment potential is that many of the older people coming into Three Percent and other JTPA programs have deficits in the areas of formal schooling and have low levels of reading proficiency, yet they have the near-term potential to be high quality workers. Their reading deficiencies make it difficult to assess their skill levels accurately, since many of the traditionally used assessment tools are geared for higher reading levels. Also, many of the traditional assessment tools are too long. According to one program director, once older people have made the decision to enroll in a program they have little patience with any test that lasts longer than an hour.

Yet without a thorough and accurate assessment process, programs are less likely to serve older people well. Certainly, if an older worker's basic skills deficits are not diagnosed, there is little likelihood that the individual will be steered toward adult basic education to remedy those problems. Yet, low reading levels or basic math levels may inhibit an older person from succeeding in occupational skills training in a classroom or on-the-job setting, resulting in feelings of in-

adequacy and failure. The development of appropriate assessment tools, and the lack of staff trained to interpret those tools properly, continues to be an area of serious need for older worker programs.

An excellent description of assessment instruments can be found in the monograph quoted above, *Using Basic Skills Testing to Improve the Effectivenenss of Remediation in Employment and Training Programs for Youth*, available at no cost from the National Commission for Employment Policy. Although the paper is geared toward youth, the appended listing of assessment tools can be helpful to older worker programs as well.

Beyond the use of formal assessment instruments, however, older worker program staff should consider the use of structured interviews as an assessment methodology with some of their clients. Often, an older person who is reluctant to take a written assessment test will open up to a trained and empathetic interviewer.

IS JOB SEARCH ENOUGH?

Job search assistance is the most common type of empoyment-related service older people receive. Most often, it is provided in a group setting, which has the advantages of saving time, promoting sharing of experience among group members, and utilizing peer input. It also builds independence by teaching the skills older people need to seek employment on their own in the future.

There has been some criticism of Title IIA programs which provided some of their participants with job search assistance and not much else. If all the client needs is a little help finding a job (as opposed to training for one), the argument goes, they could probably get work eventually on their own, and are certainly not among those "harder-to-serve" people who are supposed to be JTPA's main client group.

With older workers, this argument doesn't hold. While older workers should certainly have access to skills training, many already have skills but have little understanding of current labor market needs. Or, they haven't the confidence or the knowledge to sell their skills effectively. Or, they need help identifying or redefining their skills to fit employer needs.

The key issue is that older people should have access to a full range of services, depending on what they need. But job search assistance alone — especially when it includes a strong motivational component — is not necessarily an inappropriate or inadequate approach to meeting some older people's needs.

WHAT ARE THE KEY SKILLS TRAINING CONSIDERATIONS?

Older adults can benefit from skills training just as well as younger students can, but their different learning styles suggest special consideration in designing and delivering classroom-based skills training to meet their needs. Trainer attitude can be particularly important; there is some evidence that older trainees take longer than younger ones to feel confident in their mastery of a skill, and trainers need to allow them that time.

Training principles that have proven to be productive for older adults include the following:

- Training should be directly job-related. Older people learn best if they know how the subject matter will apply on the job.

- Training should lead to existing positions. Perhaps because they feel they have not got "all the time in the world" to re-enter the workforce and establish themselves in a new career, older people want to be assured that there will be a job waiting for them when they complete their training. They also want it to lead to jobs in the local community, as most older people resist relocating for a job.

- Training should be hands-on, rather than passive. Older people may lack self-confidence about their work abilities, especially if they have been out of the workforce for any length of time, if they have been laid off, or if they are being trained for something unrelated to their past work experiences. They learn best if they can practice their new skills on equipment or in situations similar to what they will encounter on the job.

- Training should be self-paced and individualized. This approach builds self-confidence by

putting the older person in charge of his or her training. The trainee can then spend whatever time is necessary to not only master a skill but to feel comfortable with that new skill. Given the variation in learning speed, particularly in the 60 to 80 age range when certain learning-related abilities do begin to decline, self-paced and individualized training can succeed where a more structured timetable may not.

- Training should be accessible. A training site near public transportation is ideal; ample free parking nearby is another plus. The training facility should have good acoustics and should be well-lit, cheerful, and equipped with comfortable furniture.[17]

It is also important to be aware of, and accommodate to the extent possible, any age-related disabilities (e.g., hearing loss), and to counsel as needed any older trainees who continue to lack confidence in their ability to participate in a classroom setting. And, as noted earlier, while computer-assisted instruction can be very effective with students of any age, older adults unfamiliar with computer use may need extra patience and attention to overcome their computer anxiety.

HOW WELL DOES OJT WORK FOR OLDER PEOPLE?

Often, older people who resist enrolling in classroom training do so because they have an immediate income need annd cannot afford the deferred wage classroom training offers. For them, on-the-job training may be the best answer.

Although OJT is far from the most common type of intervention offered to older workers, it is a successful strategy that should be used more often. In Vermont, for example, 73 percent of older OJT participants were still employed after 13 weeks, and 62 percent where still on the job after a year.[18] In addition to the high likelihood that it results in a permanent placement, on-the-job training is effective for older workers for some of the same reasons Title V is so popular: It provides income for that majority of clients who need income quickly; careful OJT job development and matching can individualize the placement to meet the client's skills and preferences; and it provides training in a job setting for people who may not have had recent employment experience.

OJT works best when the person doing the job placement assesses the situation, works with the employer, sells the employer on a specific older applicant (rather than on the OJT concept), and comes to an agreement that the person will need some additional training on the job, according to Ann Lordeman of the National Association of State Units on Aging, who has worked with many local programs. Negotiation is a key aspect in individualizing OJT to meet the company's needs, she says. Both parties must agree on how many weeks or months of training are needed, and then, if there is still some employer reluctance to hire the older individual, OJT can be offered as a "sweetener," with further negotiations to determine the percentage of the OJT wages to be paid by the employer and by the program. In this way, the employer is forced to recognize the additional training costs and time involved in OJT. "First you sell the car, then you tell the buyer how to finance it. If you sell the OJT slot before you sell the person," Lordeman cautions, "you've sold the person out."

WHEN IS ENTREPRENEURIAL TRAINING APPROPRIATE FOR OLDER WORKERS?

The ideal entrepreneurial training candidate is well organized, manages time well, is a creative problem solver, and is willing to take risks. Older people are somewhat more likely to have developed the first three characteristics over their lifetimes than are their younger counterparts; a well-designed entrepreneurial training course for appropriate candidates, coupled with access to management expertise, can reduce the risk factor enough to attract some older workers and help them build viable businesses. One such effort run with Three Percent funds in Program Year 1988 by the Berkshire (Massachusetts) Training and Employment Program, found that careful assessment and selection, 48 hours of classroom training, and 24 hours of post-training counseling did indeed enable older individuals to develop business plans and establish small service businesses. Several states run entrepreneurial training programs with their Title III funds, with some older participants.

However, there are some very real down sides that have inhibited states from initiating more entrepreneurial training for seniors:

- A concern that the individual engaged in the business will be unable to support himself-herself with potentially small profits from the business;
- A lack of applicants who can meet the income eligibility criteria;
- A lack of income to support the individual while in training and during the start-up of the business; and
- Difficulty of monitoring and evaluating programs, especially cottage industries.[19]

Also, there is the likelihood that those whom most closely fit the entrepreneurial profile are over the Three Percent income limits; Title III may be a better vehicle for providing entrepreneurial training because of is broader eligibility vis-a-vis income. Finally, there is generally little or no access to venture capital for older entrepreneurial candidates, a circumstance which limits the types of businesses which can be initiated to those with very low start-up costs and for which the individual already has most of the necessary materials.

WHY ARE PART-TIME PLACEMENTS SO IMPORTANT FOR OLDER PEOPLE?

Three-quarters of workers 55 and over prefer part-time over full-time work. Three-quarters of the current labor force experience a preference for continuing some kind of paid part-time work after retirement.[20] In order to attract older people to their programs, job developers in Three Percent Set-Aside programs and in programs such as JTPA Title III with older people among their clients need to help sell the part-time work option to employers.

Whether or not to count part-time placements for JTPA reporting purposes is strictly a state issue. Early on, some states restricted the use of part-time placements, considering anything less than full time not a quality placement. Now, however, most states recognize that part-time placements are very appropriate for many older people, and encourage that outcome, at least in Three Percent programs. To the extent that older people are served through other parts of JTPA, part-time placements ought to be considered appropriate as well, if that meets the older person's needs and preferences.

Some state performance measurement systems for Title IIA programs still discourage part-time placements through the performance measures used. It is important for SDAs in those states to advocate changes at the state level so that service to older workers that results in part-time placements is not discouraged. A necessary step in that process is that SDAs need to document part-time IIA placements by age, as well as documenting that those part-time placements are indeed compatible with older workers' goals as expressed during the intake and goal-development process.

There is a strong advocacy role that job developers should be playing relative to part-time placements. Non-wage benefits (especially health coverage) are not usually available to part-timers, even those in permanent part-time positions. This is particularly problemmatic for older workers who are too young for Medicare and who need health insurance. As labor shortages accelerate, it should become easier to "sell" the concept of prorated benefits for part-time workers — a move that would benefit part-timers of all ages.

HOW DO WAGE LEVELS RELATE TO PART-TIME PLACEMENTS?

It is a fact that part-time work is usually low paid work, of workers of any age. Researchers have found that hourly wages tend to decline about 30 to 40 percent for a 20-hour work week as compared to a 35-hour work week.[21] As companies begin to see that alternative work schedules (including part-time work and job-sharing) are helpful to them as well as the the worker seeking less than a full-time workload, it may be that wages for part-time work will rise somewhat, but that is just hopeful speculation. Meanwhile, programs placing seniors (or workers of any age) in part-time work should not use wage levels as a primary measure of the quality of the placement (although of course the best possible wage should be sought).

Older workers, like other individuals served by the job training system, should work with a counselor early on to complete an Employment Development Plan (EDP). A part of that process should be determining whether part-time or full-time work is desired, and what wage level is reasonable and adequate. Older people's needs are often quite different in terms of earnings and scheduling from younger workers supporting families. Many (especially those over 62) would trade higher wages for more flexible work opportunities. That does not mean that job developers should relegate older workers to minimum wage or entry-level salaries; it does mean that the placement and its earning potential should be measured against the needs and preferences of the individual. Also, as noted earlier, older workers are not a monolithic group; their needs are based on their age, their sex, whether they are a displaced homemaker or a dislocated worker, etc.

HOW CAN YOU INCREASE YOUR POST-PLACEMENT RETENTION RATES?

The most important thing you can do to increase retention rates for Three Percent Program participants once they find and accept a job is to take plenty of time up front to determine the older worker's goals and skills. That may take more time for older people than for younger people — because they may have more skills, because those skills may be harder to identify or measure, and because their goals may include elements such as part-time work which they may not initially think is possible to find.

Another strategy that affects retention rates is a job development process that includes educating employers (and supervisors, and even co-workers) about older workers. Older workers are often the victims of age discrimination — conscious or inadertent — that makes them uncomfortable enough to quit a job, or that gets in the way of their satisfactory performance. Job developers who learn about some of the common negative stereotypes about older workers and present employers with facts and examples that contradict those sterotypes are increasing the likelihood that their older worker placements will succeed over the long haul. While few older worker programs have the money to undertake comprehensive employer education campaigns, it is important for all staff to know the facts about older worker abilities and performance, in order to counter employer objections that may arise due to lack of knowledge or belief in older worker myths and stereotypes.

WHAT ARE THE KEY STAFFING ISSUES FOR THREE PERCENT PROGRAMS?

Appropriate staffing at every stage of the older worker job training process can make or break the program. This is particularly important when an SDA is running the Three Percent Program; while SDA staff are generally knowledgeable about job training in general they may not be sensitive to the older persons needs and issues.

Generally, it is advisable to have older worker programs staffed by specialists who are assigned solely to the older worker program. The ideal staff candidate is experienced in working with older people; however, that lack can be remedied with proper training for a staff person who is dedicated at least 20 hours a week to the older worker program. The ideal candidate is also an older person, particularly for client counseling and job development responsibilities.

It is not always possible to find program staff experienced in working with older people. Chicago's Operation ABLE, one of the most respected older worker training and placement programs, has found that looking for the following traits when recruiting older worker staff can help predict success, even without specific older worker program experience: an absence of prejudice regarding older persons; an appreciation of the potential of older workers for the labor force; a willingness to acknowledge older workers have unique as well as genuine barriers to employment; and a willingness to accept additional training and read materials relating to older workers.[22]

Finally, it is critical to make specialized training opportunities available to older worker program staff. The best Three Percent Programs are those in which staff attend training conferences sponsored by aging organizations and older worker training sessions offered by government agencies and other providers. The opportunity to exchange ideas with older worker staff from other

jurisdictions (and from other programs such as JTPA Title III or OAA Title V, as well as private employers with innovative older worker recruiting, training, and retention programs) breeds creative problem-solving, innovation, and adaptation of proven strategies. The more exposure staff have to a variety of older worker strategies in the public and private sectors, the more able they will be to help educate employers about the value of older workers, the approaches their industry peers have taken, and the ways in which the Three Percent Program can fit into their human resource development agenda. This is particularly important in small programs in which there is only one person responsible for older workers; that person can easily become very isolated.

WHAT DATA SHOULD PROGRAMS COLLECT, AND WHY?

The U.S. Department of Labor requires that states collect and report very little data from the Three Percent programs they fund. Only expenditures, total participants, and total terminations are required on the semi-annual report. The Department requires no sub-state data or outcome information.

Most states, on the other hand, have fairly sophisticated data collection systems for their Three Percent programs. Most of them use the same management information system they use for their Title IIA programs, and collect many or all of the same data items from the Three Percent programs. For example, most states require programs to collect participant characteristics such as sex, race, educational attainment, and whether a participant is long-term unemployed, out of the labor force, a displaced homemaker, or a welfare recipient. Unless they have adjusted their MIS systems specifically for the Three Percent program, however, states don't generally collect age ranges within the Three Percent program, noting only "55+," rather than "55-62," "62-65," "65+," or other useful breakouts. Less than half the states collect characteristics data separately for participants and for terminees; the majority look only at participants.

Outcome data is a major gap. Except for cost per placement and entered employment rates, termination data is not a high priority. That is unfortunate, as the lack of data makes it difficult to analyze the impact of various types of intervention on various types of older workers. Thus, the program's success can be documented superficially, but without in-depth analysis of what works for whom. In particular, it is hard to judge how — or whether — program participation affects individuals over the long term.

Data collection is both time-consuming and expensive, but, without good data, it is virtually impossible to make a strong case for continuation or expansion of the set-aside program. Those local programs that do collect more data than their states require can build a case for the effectiveness of their individual programs, but the Three Percent program as a whole suffers because of the lack of comparable state and local data. The National Governors' Association, the National Association of State Units on Aging, the National Council on the Aging, and other organizations have undertaken limited surveys from time to time which have provided "snapshots" of state or local activities, but this is clearly an area in which more work is needed. We need to expand the knowledge base about what works in older worker programming generally and about the effectivenness of the Three Percent program specifically.

RECOMMENDED READING

The preceding issues paper raised issues related to the JTPA Three Percent Program. This bibliography lists some of the best resources, from both the public and the private sectors, that address older worker issues in depth and profile individual programs' strategies and solution.

This bibliography is adapted from one prepared by Ann Lordeman.*

Learning More About Older Workers

Aging America: Trends and Projections 1987-88 Edition. Washington: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. This report provides data on the health, income, employment, housing, and social conditions of today's population, with excellent demographic information for employment programs. Available from: The U.S. Senate Special Committee on Aging, Attention Publications, SD-G 41 Dirksen Senate Office Building, Washington, DC 20510 (202) 224-5364)

Labor Market Problems of Older Workers. Report of Secretary Of Labor. Washington: U.S. Department of Labor, January 1989. This report analyzes labor market problems of displace older workers and examines institutional arrangements such as pension rules and the supply of part-time jobs that may limit the employment opportunities of older workers. Available from the U.S. Department of Labor.

Older Worker Task Force: Key Policy Issues for the Future. Report of the Secretary of Labor. Washington: U.S. Department of Labor, January 1989. This report summarizes the policy implications of the aging workforce. Available from the U.S. Department of Labor.

Rothstein, Frances R. *A Status Report on Displaced Homemakers and Single Parents in the United States.* This is an important document for older worker program planners because it describes the characteristics and needs of the 70 percent of the displaced homemakers in the United States who are 55 years old or older, and recommends appropriate policies and service strategies. Available from: Displaced Homemakers Network, 1010 Vermont Ave., NW, Suite 817, Washington, DC 20005.

Worker 45+: Today and Tomorrow. Washington: American Association of Retired Persons. This booklet profiles workers aged 45 and older and discusses likely changes in the future workforce. It is helpful for planning purposes because it breaks out information by age cohort on topics such as full-time/part time work, labor force participation by sex and race, wage rates, and work attitudes. Available from: American Association of Retired Persons, Worker Equity Department, 1909 K Street, NW, Washington, DC 20049.

Learning More About Older Worker Ptograms

Alegria, Fernando L., Jr., and Ann Lordeman. *Serving Older Individuals Under The Job Training Partnership Act: State Initiatives and Practices.* Washington: National Governors' Association and National Association of State Units on Aging, June 1988. This publication documents trends, policies, and practices of JTPA older worker set-aside programs on topics ranging state policy issues such as income eligibility and performance standards to examples of training strategies, administrative arrangements, and state-level media campaigns. Available from: National Governors' Association Publication Center, 444 N. Capitol Street, NW, Suite 250, Washington, DC 20001.

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Evaluation Study of The Senior Community Service Employment Program Funded Under Title V of the Older Americans Act. Washington: U.S. Department of Labor, July, 1986. This study provides detail how SCSEP (also known as Title V) works, and provides everything JTPA program operators need to know in order to coordinate with the SCSEP program locally. For more information on this report, contact Marlin Ferral, U.S. Department of Labor, (202) 535-0677.

Older Workers: Prospects, Problems and Policies: 9th Annual Report. Washington: National Commission for Employment Policy 1985. This report examines the causes of labor market problems faced by many older workers and public and private sector policies which could alleviate these problems. Available from: National Commission for Employment Policy, 1522 K Street, NW, Suite 300, Washington, DC 20005.

An Orientation to the Older Americans Act. Revised Edition. Washington: National Association of State Units on Aging, July 1985. This book covers all aspects of the OAA, discusses the role of aging organizations in influencing the goals of public policy, and includes an introduction to employment programs and related services helpful to newcomers to the field of aging. Limited quantities available from: National Association of State Units on Aging, 2033 K Street, NW, Suite 304, Washington, DC 20006, (202) 785-0707.

Proceedings of the National Conference on Older Worker Involvement in The Job Training Act. Washington: National Association of State Units on Aging, July 1984. These proceedings are an excellent handbook for persons interested in learning about JTPA, its potential for older workers, and strategies for coordinating JTPA with other programs. Available from the National Association of State Units on Aging, 2033 K Street, NW, Suite 304, Washington, DC 20006 (202) 785-0707.

Rothstein, Frances R. (editor) *Commitment to an Aging Workforce: Strategies and Models for Helping Older Workers Acheive Full Potential*. National Council on the Aging, 1988. This comprehensive discussion of older worker programming was based on site work done by the National Council on the Aging's Prime Time Productivity Program, and includes articles by a wide variety of older worker program experts. Available from: The National Council on the Aging, 600 Maryland Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20024. (202) 479-1200.

How To Operate Older Worker Programs

Lester, Branda, *Job Placement Systems For Older Workers (2 Volumes)*. Washington: National Caucus and Center on Black Aged, Inc. Based on a study of successful older worker employment programs in 12 states, these books provide a detailed analysis of what job placement techniques work well in a variety of economic environments. Available from: The National Caucus and Center on Black Aged, Inc., 1424 K Street, NW, Suite 500, Washington, DC 20005. Attn: Larry Crecy, (202) 637-8400.

Lester , Brenda. *A Practitioner's Guide for Training Older Workers*. Washington: National Commission for Employment Policy, 1984.

This planning and program development guide was developed to help practitioners design, implement and evaluate training programs for older workers. It is particularly useful for anyone who is just starting to work in older worker programs. Available from: National Commission for Employment Policy, 1522, K Street, NW, Suite 300, Washington, DC 20005.

Lordeman, Ann, Terry Nixon, and Frances R. Rothstein. *Making JTPA Work for Older Persons: A National Catalogue Of Practical Hoow-To's*. Washington, DC: National Association of State Units on Aging, May 1987. This handbook summarizes innovative approaches and helpful hints from older worker practitioners across the country. Interspersed throughout are handouts from recognized experts that

supplement the narrative. Available from: National Association of State Unites on Aging, 2033 K Street, NW, Suite 304, Washington, DC 20006.

Merrill, Fred L. *Job Search Manual for Mature Workers.* Los Angeles: Los Angeles Council on careers for Older Americans, 1987. Written primarily for older job seekers with professional, managerial, and technical backgrounds, this manual includes checklists, worksheets, and guidelines designed to help older job seekers identify their own needs, strengths, interests, and employment goals. Available from: Los Angeles Council on Careers for Older Americans, 5225 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 204, Los Angeles, CA 90036 (213) 939-0391.

More Recruiment Strategies. Washington: National Association of State Units on Aging. Topics include how-to's for getting others to recruit for and with you, hints for improving your recruitment brochures, steps to make all of the media work for you, and much more. Available from: National Association of State Units on Aging, 2033 K Street, NW, Suite 304, Washington, DC 20006.

Older Kansans Employment Program Handbook. (1985) Manhattan, Kansas: North Central - Flint Hills Area Agency on Aging. Based on an award-winning older worker employment program, this handbook provides specific guidance generating publicity, reaching employers, conducting job seeker workshops, using volunteers and making placements. Available from: North Central-Flint Hills Agency on Aging, 437 Houston, Manhattan, KS 66502.

Supportive Services Reference Guide. Washington: The National Caucus and Center on Black Aged, Inc. Topics include income and eligibility issues of Social Security, SSI, Medicare/Medicaid, Food Stanps, Federal benefits for older veterans and their dependents, taxes and retirement for Older Americans, and the Older Americans Act. Available from: The National Caucus and Center on Black Aged, Inc., 1424 K Street, NW, Suite 500, Washington , DC 20005. Attn: Larry Crecy (202) 637-8400.

WORKING WITH EMPLOYERS

Employing Older Americans: Opportunities and Constraints. Research Report No. 916. New York: The Conference Board, 1988. Business, government, community leaders examine myths about older workers, hiring retirees to boost productivity, company age discrimination audits, participating in community retraining programs, and the next wave of legislation. Available from: The Conference Board, Inc., 845 Third Avenue, New York, New York 10022. (212) 759-0900.

Finding Jobs for Older Workers. Washington: National Association of State Units on Aging. Topics include proven steps for making "sales", effective marketing campaigns, tips for improving your business cards, ads, and brochures. Available from: National Association of State Units on Aging, 2033 K Street, NW, Suite 304, Washington, DC 20006 (202) 785-0707.

Invest in Experience: New Directions for an Aging Workforce. Washington: National Alliance of Business, 1985. Written for a business audience, is an effective tool for job developers to distribute to companies with which they are seeking an entree. Available from: National Alliance of Business, 1201 New York Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20005 (202) 289-2910.

Older Americans in the Workforce: Challenges and Solutions. Bureau of National Affairs, 1987. This special report illustrates business issues concerning older workers with 14 case studies of company practices and programs. Available from: BNA Response Center (800) 372-1033.

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Rhine S. H., *Managing Older Workers: Company Policies and Attitudes*. Report No. 860. New York: The Conference Board, Inc., 1984. This report explores the extent to which company policies and practices vis-a vis older workers are likely to encourage a continuation in the loss of momentum in the early retirement trend. Available from: The Conference Bord, Inc., 845 Third Ave., New York, New York 10022. (212) 759-0900.

The Older Worker: A Silver Opportunity. Boston: Careers for Later Years, Inc., 1986. Drawn from the work of Operation ABLE of Greater Boston, this handbook helps job developers to understand and counter whatever objections employers may have to hiring older people. It also characterizes the wide variety of older job-seekers a program may encounter. Available from: Careers for Later Years, World Trade Center Boston, Commonwealth Pier, Suite 306, Boston, Massachusetts 02210-2004. (617) 439-5580.

Workers Over 50: Old Myths, New Realities. (AARP Control Number PW3691-186) Washington: American Association of Retired Persons, 1986. This report presents information on corporate attitudes and practices regarding older workers, based on interviews of 400 corporate human resource decision makers. Available from: AARP Fulfillment, 1909 K Street, NW, Washington, DC 20049.

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